



## A Look at the Environmental Issues of 2003

By Rachel Stern, Earthscope Reporter

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Today's mainstream newspapers are often filled with stories that are the written equivalent of a Blockbuster movie; their pages contain eye-catching paragraphs of suspense, scandal, gore, and glamour. With EarthScope, we have focused on news that highlights the positive, instead of that which overwhelms with the negative. Students and teachers working together to feed the community with an organic garden were brought into focus, and Marin citizens were informed of local environmental issues and the ways they can practice more sustainable lifestyles. Here are glimpses of some of our 2003 stories:

February: The Learning Center Garden Project hosted a "Roots & Shoots" environmental youth group, where low-income and special needs children got to eat organic food grown with their own labor. The children were involved from start to finish: helping to construct straw-bale greenhouses, using them to grow plants, and finally feeding themselves and their community. The project involved a total of 65 students from the Center and about 15 adult volunteers. For information about future volunteer projects, contact the Marin Learning Center at 415-339-2832.

March: Sixth through eighth-graders from Davidson and Miller Creek Middle School worked with the Marin Conservation Corps to reduce the amount of garbage produced at their schools through helping initiate a school-wide recycling program. The Marin Conservation Corps can be contacted at [www.marincc.org](http://www.marincc.org).

Environmental education for youth was strong in Marin. The Jason Project, which took place this year at the Bay Model, gave children the opportunity to interactively work closely with leading scientists to explore different environmental issues. The project was visited by more than 3,000 elementary and middle school students from around the Bay Area. Check out the Jason Project at [www.jasonproject.org](http://www.jasonproject.org). Likewise, the Marine Mammal Center welcomed the involvement of children and adults alike, as it offers classes on local and worldwide marine mammals, and ways that they can be helped. Learn more about the Marine Mammal Center at [www.tmmc.org](http://www.tmmc.org).

May: The fourth annual Environmental Education Council of Marin meeting, with a theme of "Building Bridges," linked a variety of people and ideas. Held in the Pickleweed Park Community Center of the Canal District on May 3, it brought together a group of over two hundred individuals. Whether they were teachers, students, volunteers, or local residents of the Canal, they came equipped with ideas for the betterment of the environment and society.

July: An estimated 30,000 Americans died this year from obesity related diseases. In the past two decades, obesity has gone from 15 percent to 27 percent. The Marin County Children and Weight Coalition is one of the many public services that provides information on health issues related to nutrition and obesity. For more information, check out:  
[http://cemarin.ucdavis.edu/Nutrition,\\_Family\\_and\\_Consumer\\_Sciences/](http://cemarin.ucdavis.edu/Nutrition,_Family_and_Consumer_Sciences/).

August: An ongoing project of the Marin County Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program is to encourage the growth of native riparian or creek-side vegetation. They are vital to wildlife, yet one of the most endangered plant Communities in California. Visit [www.mcstoppp.org](http://www.mcstoppp.org) to learn more about the Marin County Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program, to view a list and pictures of native riparian plants, and to join a Creek Care group.

September: Marin County has the fourth highest asthma rate in California, with its rate exceeding the state average. The asthma count in Marin County is approximately 250,000 people. There is a correlation between the increasing levels of asthma and pollution, amount of cars on the road, and the number of housing and buildings. For more information about the Asthma Education and Resource Council and what you can do to prevent asthma attacks, visit [www.asthmacouncil.org](http://www.asthmacouncil.org)

## RESOURCES:

Marin Learning Center, 415-339-2832

Marin Conservation Corps: [www.marincc.org](http://www.marincc.org)

Marine Mammal Center: [www.tmmc.org](http://www.tmmc.org)

Jason Project: [www.jasonproject.org](http://www.jasonproject.org)

Nutrition, Family and Consumer Sciences:  
[http://cemarlin.ucdavis.edu/Nutrition,\\_Family\\_and\\_Consumer\\_Sciences/](http://cemarlin.ucdavis.edu/Nutrition,_Family_and_Consumer_Sciences/)

Marin County Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program: [www.mcstoppp.org](http://www.mcstoppp.org)

Asthma Education and Resource Council: [www.asthmacouncil.org](http://www.asthmacouncil.org)